1871

Trinity Memorial

of the

Twenty-Fifth Year

1896

1871=1896

Memorial of the Twenty=Fifth Year

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TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH, AKRON, O.
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Trinity's Pastors.

REV. W. P. RUTHROUFF.
1868-1872

REV. J. F. FAHS.
1872-1882.

REV. CHAS. EDW. KELLER.
1894.

REV. J. B. HELWIG, D. D.
1882-1886.

REV. M. J. FIREY, D. D.
1886-1894.

Names of the Officers of the Church During the Past Twenty-six Years.

NAMES	WHEN FIRST ELECTED	TIME SERVED
J. H. Hower	May 1, 1870	9 years
Charles Miller	" 1870	6 years
Reuben Dressler	" 1870	4 years
William Boerstler	" 1870	8 years
J. T. Good	" 1870	4 years
J. F. Seiberling	" 1870	22 years
William Schroeder	" 1870	4 years
B. F. Fraze	" 1870	3 years
Isaac Harter	January 1, 1871	3 years
George M. Knox	" 1871	4 years
John Wunderlich	" 1871	4 years
O. L. McMillen	" 1874	4 years
Monroe Seiberling	" 1874	8 years
Levi S. Herold	" 1874	2 years
Amos Brown	" 1875	6 years
John W. Hoegner	" 1876	2 years
Andrew Kohler	" 1876	4 years
Henry Motz	" 1876	6 years
John Motz	" 1877	20 years
John Heffleman	" 1877	2 years
Samuel Fretz	" 1878	2 years
Charles A Holloway	" 1878	4 years
William Dressler	" 1878	2 years
Adam Good	" 1879	1 year
Amos J. White	" 1879	4 years
O. M. Mosser	" 1880	4 years
B. S. Cooke	" 1880	5 years
George Smith	" 1881	2 years
Harvey Hower	" 1882	2 years
Henry Miller	" 1882	2 years
H. A. Palmer	January 7, 1884	6 years
John M. Harding	" 1884	2 years
George Rinker	" 1884	2 years
J. R. Campbell	January 8, 1885	8 years
Columbus Seiberling	January 4, 1886	4 years
L. N. Myers	" 1886	2 years
Edward P. Otis	January 3, 1887	4 years
Samuel K. Black	" 1887	4 years
L. C. Miles	January 2, 1888	6 years
Peter Reading	January 4, 1889	1 year
George H. Woron	January 6, 1890	4 years
John Dixon	" 1890	2 years
Dan Hill	January 5, 1891	4 years
John H. Davidson	" 1891	4 years
Emil Gammeter	January 4, 1892	4 years
Henry S. Stetler	January 1, 1894	3 years
J. J. Feudner	" 1894	3 years
George W. Seiber	January 7, 1895	2 years
Fred W. Albrecht	" 1895	2 years
Dr. J. C. Shuman	January 6, 1896	1 year

Six of the Charter Members and the Present Trustees.

MR. AND MRS. J. F. SEIBERLING.

MR. AND MRS J. H. HOWER.

MR. AND MRS. WM. SCHROEDER.

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Superintendent	Edward P. Otis.
Assistant Superintendent	John F. Seiberling.
Second Assistant Superintendent	Henry S. Stetler.
Secretary	Jacob Carns.
Assistant Secretary	Katherine M. Gutedel.
Treasurer	Harry G. Guss.
Librarian	John M. Harding.
Assistant Librarian	Cyrus H. Reading.
Chorister	William R. Palmer.
Pianist	Mrs. John A. Botzum.
Assistant Pianist	May Sell.
Historian	Dan Hill.

Teachers of Trinity Lutheran Sunday School.

Harry A. Palmer.
Emil Gammeter.
Elmer G. Witmer.
Dr. John C. Shuman.
John J. Feudner.
John A. Botzum.
Philip C. Huber.
Lucius C. Miles.
Jacob R. Campbell.
Dan Hill.
Francis Seiberling.

Mrs. Dr. William K. Foltz.
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Mrs. John J. Feudner.
Mrs. Reuben Tate.
Mrs. Joseph A. Gehres.
Lillian Cruse.
Lottie Palmer.
Marion Huber.
Ida Wunderlich.
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Emma M. Sell.

Sterling K. Black.

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J. F. SEIBERLING.

J. R. CAMPBELL.

JOHN MOTZ.

H. S. STETLER.

G. W. SIEBER.

DR. J. C. SHUMAN.

J. J. FEUDNER.

F. W. ALBRECHT.

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J. R. Campbell.

John Motz. J. J. Feudner.

MUSIC.

Pastor. Mrs. F. A. Seiberling.

W. R. Palmer. Mrs. E. P. Otis.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

H. S. Stetler. E. P. Otis.

H. A. Palmer.

Mrs. W. K. Foltz. J. R. Campbell.

SOCIETIES.

J. J. Feudner. H. S. Stetler. John Motz.

BANQUET.

John Motz.

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W. H. Hiltabiddle.	B. Angel.	E. Gammeter.
J. A. Gehres.	H. M. Fritz.	Elizabeth Wunderlich.
John Motz.	Amanda Shoemaker.	C. A. Hankey.
C. H. Reading.	Dan Hill.	R. P. Mason.
M. A. Young.	J. M. Harding.	Sarah Foltz.

A. H. Guss. N. G. Emig.

PROGRAM.

J. R. Campbell.

Thursday, May 28, 8 P. M.

G. W. SIEBER, PRESIDING.

1. Selection by Sunday School Orchestra, with organ accompaniment .....

2. Devotional Exercises .....
J. R. CAMPBELL.

3. Solo, "Rock of Ages" ..... *Shepherd*
MRS. F. A. SEIBERLING.

4. Address .....
GEO. W. SIEBER.

5. Solo, "Cast Thy Bread on the Waters" .... *Roechel*
MRS. F. A. SEIBERLING.

6. Letter from Rev. J. F. Fahs .....

7. Benediction .....
PASTOR.

REV. J. F. FAH'S LETTER.

To the Members of Trinity Lutheran Congregation, Akron, Ohio.

Greetings: "Grace unto you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

You will please accept these humble congratulations upon the Quarto-Centennial celebration of the laying of the corner-stone upon which your house of God has been reared. A quarter of a century has passed from time into eternity since that stone was laid. Who can tell the joys and sorrows experienced by those who participated in that happy service? Many of those then present have been called by Him, in whose hands all our lives are, into the Spirit World, and are, no doubt, watching with intense interest the spirit with which you enter upon this Quarto-Centennial. May true thanksgiving to the God of all mercies fill all your hearts for continuing to you, through a quarter of a century, the blessings of an open Bible, a preached gospel and an unshackled Christianity, for which that corner-stone was laid and this house of God was reared. And, in view of all that God has done for you as a congregation during all these years, your most fitting service will be to erect your Ebenezer, and with profound gratitude inscribe upon the records of this day "*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*"

In the gathering of the congregation worshipping in the church reared upon the corner-stone laid a quarter of a century ago, in the good providence of God, I, as its second regular pastor, have had a part in forming its history, to be handed down to coming generations. Then the congregation was small, numbering only sixty adult members, with no conveniences for Sunday School and young people's development in church work, nothing but the bare church room. And as I bring before my mind the scenes of a nearly ten years' pastorate, I see scenes of joy and encouragement and also scenes of sadness and discouragements, so that I have often wondered at the success which has attended that pastorate. But still God had not forsaken us; and, in spite of all the waves of adversity which rolled across our path, the congregation grew in numbers, for there were added during my pastorate 228 adult members, many of them active and willing workers in everything to promote the interests of the congregation. One of the

most pleasant experiences in my pastorate has been the number of prominent men and women always ready and willing to lend a helping hand to make the undertaking a success. And with all the changes that have entered into the history of Trinity Lutheran congregation of Akron, Ohio, its past success over all the struggles and adversities through which it had several times been led, this Quarto-Centennial should inspire every member with confidence and hope for its future. In view of what has been accomplished, the large increase in its membership, with all the conveniences and comfortable surroundings to carry on successfully all necessary church work, should bring to the front a corresponding number of earnest and willing workers to make the future still more successful than the past. And with such a band of men and women moved and directed by the spirit of God, aiding their pastor in his efforts to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, Trinity Lutheran congregation of Akron, Ohio, will become a power of strength in this section of the great State of Ohio. And may such a spirit of earnest consecration to the great and grand work be awakened in the heart of every member of the congregation by this Quarto-Centennial celebration. And to this end may God add His blessing. Yours in the Gospel of Christ,

J. F. FAHS.

Friday, May 29, 8 P. M.

WM. SCHROEDER, PRESIDING.

1. Remarks . . . . . .
   MR. SCHROEDER.
2. Scripture Lesson . . . . . .
   E. P. OTIS.
3. Prayer . . . . . .
   REV. W. L. LEISHER.
4. Solo, "He That Keepeth Israel" . . . . . *Schloesser*
   MRS. E. P. OTIS.
5. History of Trinity Lutheran Church, Akron, O. . . .
   J. F. SEIBERLING.
6. Letter from Rev. J. B. Helwig, D. D . . . . . .
7. Benediction . . . . . .

Western Biogl. Pub. Co.

D. F. Luberling

HISTORY OF TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH AKRON, OHIO.

As an occasion of this kind is new in this church, it might be of interest to the congregation, or to those not already informed, to know something of the source that prompted its undertaking.

I think it proper, therefore, to state in the outset, that to Brother Keller belongs the credit of suggesting the idea, and arranging for the carrying out of this Quarto Jubilee Celebration. He was not only the originator of these anniversary exercises, but he saw the interest and importance of bringing up and reviewing the past history of this church and thus preserving its history.

I was selected for the task of producing the historical facts for the occasion, and, for the want of proper dates and the original minute books, which are lost, this has been no small undertaking. I have endeavored to find all of the material obtainable bearing on the subject. By scraping our memories and delving among old papers, most of the important incidents connected with the organization and building of this church have been found. These scraps have been put on paper, which I have before me, and will endeavor to read, and trust they may be of sufficient interest to command your attention for a short time.

In this fast age in which we live, we are apt to fix our mind only on the things of the present, and cast our eyes in the direction of the future, while we let the things of the past sink into oblivion, and the world is not the wiser for their ever having existed. In this way important history becomes lost simply through our carelessness and indifference. If lost history could be reproduced when needed, it would sometimes be of untold value. In the perusal of history we sometimes become deeply interested, and experience a degree of fascination that tends to excite love of novelty and romance.

We often find special interest in reviewing incidents and history of our early lifetime, that perhaps we helped to make, or were directly or indirectly connected with. In the quiet repose of the evening, with the cares of the day laid aside, how often do our thoughts revert to the things of the long ago, and rem-

iniscences of our past come up to recollection to give us pleasure or pain, according to their association with good or evil, pleasant or unpleasant things.

Who among the members of Trinity Lutheran Church that do not feel a desire to know something of its early history?

The question in recent years has often been asked, How old is this church? When was this church organized? Who was its first pastor? What was its first membership? When was the Sunday School organized? Who was its first superintendent, etc., etc.—questions that cannot now be very readily answered, because our historian has sadly neglected our church history. The early records have been lost, and but few of the original members are now living to tell the story from memory.

Like struggles in business ventures in their incipiency, so with churches. They have usually to pass through a period of struggle and trial, before a self-sustaining period is reached.

Trinity Lutheran Church of Akron was no exception to this rule. And it is unfortunate that the original minute books have been lost, for without them we are compelled to pass by many of the important incidents that transpired in the infant days, when the church was struggling from a state embryo to a state of maturity. We are compelled to depend largely for dates and other important information on the memory of the few original members still living, all but two of whom are present on this occasion. There is a degree of sadness in the thought that of the eighteen original members that constituted the membership of the first Lutheran Mission Church, organized in 1868, only eight are now living. They are, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Hower, Mr. and Mrs. William Schroeder, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Seiberling, Mrs. Isaac Harter and Mrs. John T. Good.

The time does not seem long, only about 27 years; yet in this brief period how great are the changes, not only in the people, but in the Church, Sunday School and the city.

The first efforts towards the formation of an English Lutheran Church in this city date back to the spring of the year 1866, and were made by a returning missionary from a foreign land.

One June morning of that year a stranger came to our door and rang the bell. After he was admitted, he introduced himself by saying that his name was Morris Officer; that he was a Lutheran minister; that he had been a missionary in Africa; that his health failing, he had returned to his native land to regain it, and while here he wished to do some good; that he had heard of

Akron as being a flourishing city, but without an English Lutheran Church, and that he came here with a view of forming an English Lutheran congregation.

He then went on to say: "Brother, life is so very short; we have but a brief period to live in which to do our work; we must be up and doing, and I feel I must be trying to do something for the Master's cause while I can, for my ability to do will not last long;" and says he, "I once came across a short poem which is said to be inscribed on a tombstone in Scotland, and which reads like this:

Life is but a winter's day;
Some only breakfast and away,
Others to dinner stay
And are full fed;
The oldest man but sups
And goes to bed.
Large is his debt
That lingers out the day.
He that goes soonest
Has the least to pay
At the judgment seat
In endless day.

"You see," says he, "this is rather a homemade piece of poetry; but the truth it contains of our relation to time so impressed my mind that I have not forgotten it. We cannot accomplish anything and sit still; it requires effort and action to win anything. I feel sure this is a great field for an English Lutheran Church, and only requires the proper effort and God's blessing to establish it.

"And now, brother, I was directed to you as a Lutheran and a man that would aid me to a starter in this cause. What can you do for me?"

After thinking a few moments, I told him that I did not believe I could do anything; that I did not know many Lutherans in Akron; and that, although I was raised a Lutheran and all my forefathers were Lutherans, I had been away from the Lutheran Church so long that I knew very little about it; that we had attended the Congregational Church since we came to Akron. He then commenced to tell me about the Lutheran Church, and I was greatly surprised and much interested in the revelations he made concerning it. Among the things he said was, that the Lutheran Church was not only the oldest Protestant Church in the world, but also the largest, and not only the largest, but larger numerically, than all the other Protestant Churches in the world put to-

gether. This was so remarkable a statement that I did not believe it, and I told him so; but he assured me that such was really the case, and referred me for evidence to the encyclopedias and Dr. Schmucker's works. I afterwards consulted these references and found that they really verified his statements.

In making these investigations, I came across statistics showing that the world contains Roman Catholics about 80,000,000, and Protestants about 70,000,000. Of the 70,000,000 Protestants, 37,000,000 are Lutherans, showing the Lutherans, among the Protestants, largely in the majority.

After hearing him talk on this subject, I became not only deeply interested, but favorably impressed with the man. This, together with the revelation to me concerning the large membership and standing of the Lutheran Church, made me feel a desire to hear all he had to say on the subject.

We invited him to stay with us over night, and that evening I learned more about the Lutheran Church than I ever knew before.

The next day I introduced him to about a dozen Lutherans. He then made an appointment for a meeting on the coming Thursday evening. The meeting was composed of the dozen Lutherans to whom I had introduced him. I regarded this attendance a very slim affair; but, notwithstanding the discouraging outlook, he preached a very interesting sermon, and told us that the attendance was encouraging, and that it was a good turnout for a beginning. The smiles that were passed around when he made this remark, indicated that all of that vast audience did not share in the same opinion of the preacher. He then left another appointment for two weeks from that evening, at which meeting the Lord's Supper would be administered.

At the appointed time, Brother Officer was on hand. The number that composed the audience was increased by three persons. The communion was administered and he preached a good sermon.

He then left another appointment for three weeks from that time. At this third meeting the attendance had increased to nineteen persons. He did not leave another appointment, but talked very encouragingly, and said he would return before long and would advise us by letter of the time.

He went away the next day, and that was the last we ever saw of Morris Officer. We afterwards learned that he never went back to his missionary field in Africa, but took a charge

out in Kansas, where he became very poor, sharing the fate of the Poor Preacher, who gives his life to the spiritual welfare of his fellows at the sacrifice (in many instances) of worldly comforts and even necessaries of life.

He died about eighteen years ago. The recollection of him often comes to my mind, not only because of the things he did and said at the brief visits he made among us, but because of the goodness of character and self-sacrificing spirit manifested in him.

After this first effort of Morris Officer, the prospects for the formation of an English Lutheran congregation in Akron seemed to have disappeared forever; but, as the sequel will show, such was not the case. Morris Officer proved to be a forerunner; he planted the small acorn, which, in due time, sprung forth, a feeble plant at first, which was nursed into a small twig; this was dressed and cultivated from time to time by diligent dressers having it in charge, till it grew into a waving tree, and this, by the industrious efforts and zealous care of its present custodian, has grown and may be compared to the oak, monarch of the forest, which we behold in the congregation that assembles here from time to time.

After this initiatory step towards the establishment of a Lutheran Church, the cause seemed to sleep, and we heard of no similar movement in Akron for upward of two years, except a visit from Rev. Rothacker, who preached several sermons, but which resulted in no movement towards the formation of a congregation.

This was the situation in the spring of the year 1868, when another stranger came to town. He was a Lutheran minister. It was none other than Rev. Dr. Pasavant of Pittsburg. He was a man of about sixty years of age, of a commanding and intelligent appearance, and it was soon passed around that he was one of the great lights of the General Council branch of the Lutheran Church in America. He introduced himself and announced his mission, which was that he came here to establish an English Lutheran congregation. He had a large experience in the work of establishing churches, hospitals and children's homes throughout the country. He had done much work of this kind in the Northwest, having established churches in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin; a children's home in Decorah, in Westerville, Ill., and other places. He at once took hold of the work he came here for, with zeal and a determination which showed that he meant

business and knew what he could and wanted to do. The zeal and energy displayed by him lent courage and inspiration to the Lutherans in Akron. He made an appointment for a meeting, which was held in the Reformed Church on the 15th day of June, 1868. About all of the Lutherans who attended the meetings of Morris Officer were present at this first Pasavant meeting, besides others, about twenty-five in all.

The magnetism and zeal displayed by the speaker seemed to enthuse the small audience. It was apparent that the seed sown by Morris Officer had only lain dormant since his visits, and now being watered, was taking root and showing forth signs of life; for the same persons took hold of the present cause with a different spirit and greater interest than they did at the first meetings two years before.

The preaching of Dr. Pasavant was, in many respects, similar to that of Morris Officer. Like a merchant showing up the good qualities of his wares, so both these gentlemen interspersed their talk largely with encomiums on the Lutheran Church, consisting of historical dates, and the mission and standing of the church in the world. But the burden of Dr. Pasavant's preaching, pertaining to the church, was concerning its pure doctrine.

With great display of oratory, he said: "To the Lutheran Church belongs the credit of promulgating the great doctrine of justification by faith. This is purely a Lutheran doctrine. On the principal doctrines of the Lutheran Church, all other Protestant denominations in the world are founded. The doctrine of justification by faith makes our church distinctive—and the peer among the Protestant family of churches in Christendom. On its pure doctrine she stands—and will stand—and live down through the ages to the end of time."

I might go on and mention many incidences connected with subsequent meetings held by Dr. Pasavant. Suffice it to say: He came here for about three months, at intervals of two to four weeks apart, and held meetings. The meetings were held principally in the halls of the town—Phœnix Hall, Bennet's Hall, Sumner Hall, and the old Methodist Church. The meetings increased in interest, which lent courage to both the preacher and the people.

In September of the year 1868, a mission church was organized. Rev. W. P. Ruthrouff came here and took charge of the mission. The mission at first was principally supported by the

Home Missionary Society of the Lutheran Church, located at Philadelphia, Pa. These were days of struggle for existence of the Lutheran cause in Akron. There were but few active members to pay anything to its support.

The number of persons enrolled as members of the Mission Church at its organization was eighteen. The names of the eighteen members are as follows:

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Hower.
Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Miller.
Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Seiberling.
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Schroeder.
Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Dressler.
Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Harter.
Mr. and Mrs. Levi Harrold.
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Motz.
Mr. Paul Giffhorn.
Mrs. John T. Good.

The Mission Church in charge of Bro. Ruthrouff received a new impetus. Services were regularly held; new members were added, interest was increased, and by April, 1869, the church had increased to forty members. The mission had become nearly self-sustaining. The question of a permanent church organization was now seriously being considered. Finally, a meeting was called to consider the question. At this meeting the situation was canvassed over. It was observed that the church was nearly self-sustaining; the membership had increased to upwards of forty active members; the feeling was harmonious, and it was decided to form into a permanent church organization.

The day appointed for this purpose was the 21st day of June, 1869. There was now much said on the subject of the name to be given to the new church organization. After various suggestions, that of Dr. Pasavant was finally adopted, which was Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity. The name was somewhat modified afterwards to the present name, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.

It was decided to invite Dr. Seiss, Dr. Laird, Dr. Pasavant and Rev. Rothacker to be present at the meeting of the organization on the 21st of June. All these reverends were present on this occasion except Dr. Seiss.

The 21st of June finally arrived. I remember it well. It was a bright morning; the sun shone in all his glory, the flowers were blooming, and a balmy breeze came from the south. At the time the congregation occupied Sumner Hall, and here this meeting was held.

One instance that I think of interest to mention was in connection with a company that walked down Market street

on their way to the hall. It was composed of Dr. Pasavant, Dr. Laird, Rev. W. P. Ruthrouff, Chas. Miller, myself and several others. As we walked along Dr. Pasavant remarked: "Brethren, do you know that this is a great day for the Lutheran Church in Akron? We will remember many of the little incidents of this day as well as the important ones. We will remember this walk we are now making and the things we are thinking and talking about, and who can say that we won't talk about this day in eternity?"

When we reached the hall it was already nearly filled, and soon was overflowing. The services were opened by Dr. Pasavant, who was considered the Father of the Church, because of his persistent efforts to establish, encourage and keep it alive when it was tottering in feebleness. It had now reached a mature condition and was to be established that day on a solid foundation. Dr. Laird preached the sermon. After the sermon, a constitution was adopted, which is the constitution we now have with a few slight amendments made since. A full church council was elected. The name of the church was adopted, and many other things done that were requisite to the church organization.

When the meeting had done with its work, the English Lutheran Church in Akron became a fixed fact. After this day's work the church made good progress. Rev. W. P. Ruthrouff was elected and installed its permanent pastor. He was devoted to his calling and was a conscientious Christian gentleman and an ordinary good preacher.

Now the church was established, but it had no place in which to worship except the halls of the town, which was not only unpleasant but very inconvenient, as we were obliged to move from one hall to another at the whims of the hall-owners.

This condition of things led to the consideration of providing a permanent place of worship. "But how shall this be accomplished?" became the absorbing question. The congregation was small and mainly made up of members of small or moderate means.

As a preliminary to the accomplishment of the desired end, three of the members, viz.: J. H. Hower, Chas. Miller and J. F Seiberling, decided to purchase a lot for a church. After canvassing different locations, the lot on which this church and parsonage now stands was selected. This was purchased at the price of $10,000. The deeds were made January 29, 1870. Then came the struggle to raise sufficient funds to build a house of

worship. A subscription was finally solicited, but it received only the three signers that purchased the lot. This condition of things did not change for several months. The three subscribers then canceled their subscription.

This made the situation look very gloomy. The minister became despondent, and a decided change was apparent in the entire congregation. This condition of things did not, however, last long. The members soon began to realize the fallacy of depending on a few men to do all the paying. A new subscription was then started, with very good success; between thirty-five and forty thousand dollars was subscribed. This assured the building of a new church. The spirit of the congregation at once became changed, and all seemed happy, and to manifest a willingness to lend a helping hand, thus reminding us of the old adage: "All is lovely while the goose hangs high."

A meeting was then called and a building committee appointed. This committee consisted of J. H. Hower, Chas. Miller and J. F. Seiberling. Plans for the new church from different architects were solicited. Those presented by Griese & Weyle, of Cleveland, O., were finally adopted by the committee. The contract for the erection of the main part of the building was also awarded to these gentlemen, which contract was signed April 19th, 1871. The work on the foundation was immediately thereafter commenced, and prosecuted without intermission, and on June 4th following, the corner-stone was laid. This occasion was another great day for the church. The congregation at this time occupied the old Methodist Church for a place of worship. The services were held in this house. The ministers from abroad were Dr. Laird and Rev. Rothacker. Dr. Laird preached the sermon for the occasion.

After the services at the church, a procession was formed, headed by the ministers, which proceeded to the site of the new church, and the corner-stone was laid in the presence of about four hundred people.

After the events of this day, the building of the church was pushed forward, and was brought to completion in May, 1872. The cost of the entire structure, including the lot, organ, frescoing, decorating and seating, complete, without the tower and Sunday School department, which were not built at this time, was $45,000.

Preparations were now made for another great day, which was the dedication of the new church. The day appointed for

this event was the 1st Sunday of June, 1872. The ministers from abroad invited to be present to officiate on this day were Rev. Dr. Pasavant, Rev. Dr. Laird and Rev. J. F. Fahs. Each of these gentlemen were present and preached a sermon on the occasion. The day was pleasant and favorable for a large congregation, which gathered and filled the church to overflowing.

Dr. Pasavant and Dr. Laird preached in the morning; Dr. Laird and Rev. J. F. Fahs preached in the evening. After the evening services, the balance required to pay the cost of the church was raised in the congregation, and the congregation had the satisfaction of looking forward to worshiping in a church free from debt. The feeling in the congregation was in a happy and satisfactory condition, which all promised success for the future growth and welfare of the church.

The subject of organizing a Sabbath School had been considered more than a year before this time, but, for the want of a suitable room, the matter was allowed to rest till the completion of the church.

This now having been accomplished, the subject was again brought up. A meeting was called for the purpose of taking action on this matter. At this meeting it was decided to at once organize a school. No one volunteered to act as a superintendent, so the pastor, Rev. W. P. Ruthrouff was elected for the office. Isaac Harter was elected secretary and Ben. Fraze was elected treasurer. As we had no library, no one was appointed for the office of librarian.

The second Sunday of June, 1872, was set for convening of the first Sunday School. On this first day of the school, we had an enrollment of forty-four scholars, teachers and officers. This was considered a good beginning, and all connected with the school took a deep interest. Mr. Ruthrouff continued to act as superintendent while pastor of the congregation.

During the summer of 1872, we began to hear mutterings of discontent from some of the members against the pastor. Some thought we ought to have a change; that the pastor was too slow; others that his preaching was not attractive; that he had no influence to draw outsiders; that the church did not increase fast enough, etc.; also heard remarks against his family, and it was surprising to hear the various-colored complaints against the pastor and family. This state of things finally came to the ears of the pastor. At first it caused him to grieve over it, and finally to resign his pastorate of the church. To the credit of the con-

gregation, it can be said that this talk of discontent against the pastor principally came from only a few members, and they among the number of those that did the least to support the church. But it was sufficient to cause the pastor anguish and grieve him away. He preached his farewell sermon the latter part of September, 1872. He received a call from the Lutheran Church at Zanesville, O., which he accepted. When he and family left Akron for this new field, I was among those that went to the train to see him off. When the train was about to start, he gave me his hand and whispered farewell, his heart too full for utterance. Although I did not think I had any hand in causing his grief, yet in that moment I felt a sense of guilt because of my connection with the church, from which I considered he had been driven away. I there said, to myself, I will never have a hand in driving a minister away from a church without ample reason.

A call had already been sent to Rev. J. F. Fahs, of Allentown, Pa., to succeed Rev. W. P. Ruthrouff. This call was accepted, and Rev. Fahs arrived in Akron the latter part of September and preached his first sermon on the sixth day of October, 1872.

The church now took a spasm of unprecedented success under the influence of the new preacher, many new members were added. This flow of prosperity run for about five or six years, when it began to wane, and signs of discontent began to manifest themselves. And it soon became apparent that the old story of finding fault with the preacher and his family would be resorted to, to get rid of him. But apparently Bro. Fahs was made of different stuff than was Bro. Ruthrouff, for he didn't scare or grieve away worth a cent. Thus things went on for several years longer, when it became apparent that the starving process was to be resorted to, for the grumblers stayed away from church and withdrew their support. Thus the paying members were greatly reduced, and it became difficult to keep up the expenses of the church. In the midst of these difficulties, Bro. Fahs gave notice of his resignation, which took effect on the eighteenth of June, 1882, when he preached his farewell sermon. He was pastor of the church nearly ten years. He received into the church 228 new members and baptized 112 children. During his ministry, the Sunday School made progress, having reached a membership of 170. At the beginning of Bro. Fahs' ministry the Dime Society was organized, and towards the end of his ministry the Ladies' Aid Society was organized. He made an effort to establish a weekly prayer meeting, but failed to make it enduring. He

took charge of the superintendency of the Sunday School in place of Bro. Ruthrouff. In September, 1873, Reuben Kratz was elected superintendent. He was the first lay superintendent, and the school made very substantial progress in his time. He filled the office till May, 1881, when he resigned, having filled the office for seven years, and J. F. Seiberling was elected to take his place, who filled the office for twelve consecutive years. During this period the school reached an enrollment of over four hundred scholars, teachers and officers. This favorable progress was mainly due to the new Sunday School chapel, which was built in the early part of this superintendency. The General Council met in the new church in October, 1872. All the great preachers of the church in the United States were present at this general conference, which was in session seven days. Dr. Seiss, Dr. Krauth, Dr. Laird and Dr. Pasavant were among the distinguished men present

And now we come to a period in the history of the church, which for critical situation, for danger incurred of causing widespread disruption in the congregation, and for final happy and favorable outcome without a wound, or the loss of a man, has probably never had a parallel in the Lutheran Church. It was the undertaking by the congregation to change their synodical connection with the General Council, and form a synodical connection with the General Synod. To state all the details and reasons that led up to the final steps to accomplish this transition, would take more time than I have to devote on this occasion, and I will, therefore, tell the story as briefly as I can.

During the latter part of Bro. Fahs' ministry, and outside of the party of chronic grumblers (such as are frequently found in churches), another party in the church was coming to the front, which was quickly joined by all the discontents. This was a party that opposed some of the modes and formulas of worship of the General Council branch of the Lutheran Church. At a meeting of the General Council at Lancaster, O., in 1871, Dr. Krauth, one of the great lights of the church, proclaimed the formula of the church, and gave utterance to these words: "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only, and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only." This rule had not since been changed at any General Council meeting, although an effort towards its modification was made at the General Council meeting that met in this house in October, 1872. This rule of the church, to the members of the congregation generally,

seemed so bigoted, narrow, and uncharitable that almost every voice was raised in opposition to it. Although this rule was not practiced in this church by either Bro. Ruthrouff or Bro. Fahs, yet the idea of belonging to a church that promulgated a rule of exclusiveness, which in effect said: "You can't come in here. You are not worthy. You must first join the Lutheran Church to be good enough to worship with us." Whether this was the proper reasoning in the premises, was an open question; but this was the way the matter was regarded generally by the members of the congregation.

Another objection that was made by a large class (all the grumblers included) was the strict adherence to the use of the liturgy by the General Council. The principal fault urged against the liturgy was that its constant use, Sabbath after Sabbath, wore it out, and destroyed the good there was in it, and made it a bore. None could say that the liturgy contained anything but that was good, but that riding it to death killed its good effect. Some contended that the liturgy should be used only on communion days; others that only a part of it should be used. While there were those that contended it should not be used at all, as it was not a requirement found in the Bible.

Thus matters stood at the close and several years before the end of Bro. Fahs' ministry. The question presented itself, "What can we do to change these things?" Finally an informal meeting was held by a number of the leading spirits to confer on the subject. This meeting was held March 4, 1882. At this meeting it was decided that the only way to get rid of those objections was to leave the General Council and join the General Synod branch of the church.

We had investigated the attitude of the General Synod on these points, and ascertained that it was liberal in its views on church government and modes of worship, and not tainted with pulpit and altar exclusiveness.

To bring about such a change was a great problem, which all realized would be hazardous to undertake in the face of opposition.

The meeting was adjourned to meet again one week from that time. At the second meeting all were better prepared to consider the situation, having thought over and gained information during the past week. It was decided that an attempt to make the change would be entirely feasible, as it was estimated that the opposition would be small. A vote was then taken, which

resulted unanimously in favor of going ahead with the attempt to make the contemplated change. The die was now cast, and whether it boded good or ill, or would prove a declaration of war, the future only must determine.

About the year 1870, steps had been taken to form a church corporation. Papers had been prepared, and all was put into the hands of Paul Gibbhorn, who was then secretary of the church council. It was not known—at this time—whether these papers had ever been filed in the State secretary's office at Columbus or not. This was a subject of great anxiety; for, if the papers were on record there, they might operate to defeat the contemplated synodical change; but, on ordering a search to be made, we received a report that no such papers were on record. This was a great relief, and was regarded a favorable omen. It appeared that Paul Gibbhorn took the original papers with him to Germany, where he went on a visit. While there he became insane and died in a madhouse, and the papers never came to light afterwards.

Steps were now quickly taken to organize and form a corporate body in the church. This was deemed necessary, in view of the contemplated building, necessary transfer of property and the contemplated synodical change, and to have a body authorized to do the business of the church in a legal manner.

A meeting of the congregation was accordingly called to take the necessary action. This meeting was held on March 17, 1882. At this meeting all the necessary steps were taken to form the corporation. The papers were prepared and at once sent to Columbus and put on record, and the corporation was completed. The incorporators were H. M. Motz, B. S. Cook, Simon Hanky, M. Seiberling and J. F. Seiberling. The church property which had, up to this time, been owned by J. H. Hower, Chas. Miller and J. F. Seiberling, was now deeded to the trustees of the new corporation, who were J. H. Hower, Wm. Schroeder and J. F. Seiberling. This was the first necessary and important step towards the consummation of the great change, and the principal thing to be done, on which all subsequent action depended, only a formal vote of the congregation being yet required.

A year or more previous to this time, the question of building the chapel and finishing and remodeling the church had been talked of, but no action taken. Simultaneously with the final decision of making the synodical change, this question again came up. A congregational meeting was called, and it was

decided to go ahead with the building. A building committee was appointed, consisting of J. H. Hower, H. M. Motz and J. F. Seiberling, and all the necessary steps were at once taken to push forward the important and much-needed work. A subscription was circulated and about $20,000 was subscribed.

While these exciting events were transpiring in the congregation, which were nearly all crowded into the months of March, April and May of the year 1882, Rev. Dr. Helwig came upon the scene. He came here in the latter part of April, 1882. He preached a sermon in the morning and evening. The congregation was well pleased with his preaching, manner of speaking and commanding appearance. A congregational meeting was called, and, without a dissenting vote, he was elected pastor, to succeed Rev. J. F. Fahs. A call was sent to him on May 3, 1882, which was accepted, to take effect after his return from Europe, on which trip he expected to start in a few days. He returned from his foreign trip in August, and came to Akron the first week in September, 1882, and preached his first sermon on the first Sunday in the latter month. The chapel and church improvements were only about one-half completed on his arrival, and were not finished till the 1st of March, 1883. In the meantime, the services were held in the Academy of Music.

The congregation and Sunday School moved from the Academy of Music into the new church and Sunday School chapel in the first week of March, 1883. The new quarters were commodious and beautiful, and proved highly satisfactory to all the people. The remodeled church and new chapel, all complete, cost $42,000. This cost, with the original cost of $45,000, made the entire property cost $87,000.

A meeting of the congregation was now called to take the last action necessary to complete the transition of the congregation from the General Council to the General Synod. The church property had heretofore all been deeded to the trustees of the corporation of the General Synod, and only a vote of the congregation was yet necessary to complete the change. This meeting was called for the second Monday evening of March, 1883. The vote resulted in about three-fourths in favor and one-fourth opposed to the change.

This ended the much dreaded step of taking the congregation and all its property from the authority of one branch of the church and turning it over to the authority of another, which was an accomplishment never known to have been done without a fight.

The remodeled church and new Sunday School chapel were dedicated on the 24th day of June, 1883. This was a great day for the congregation, now organized under the General Synod. Things now were changed. We did not see the General Council preachers here as of old on important occasions, but a new set now officiated from the General Synod.

Thoughts of old scenes come to our minds, not unmixed with regret, for we had learned to love the distinguished preachers that used to come here, especially Dr. Pasavant and Dr. Laird, more particularly the former, who had established the church and did so much to put it on a solid foundation, and who was called the Father of the Church. It was feared that the action of the congregation in leaving the General Council would look mean and ungrateful, and cause grief to the old gentleman, as well as Dr. Laird; and it made us feel sorry—and gave a sense of having done wrong. How this action of the congregation was regarded by them was never known, for we never saw nor heard from either of them afterwards.

The ministers on this occasion were Dr. Helwig, Dr. Wils, Dr. Kuhns, Dr. Conrad and Rev. J. C. Kauffman. All the money required to pay the indebtedness of the church, about $23,000, was raised on that day, and the church was clear from debt. The church and Sunday School were now in a clear sailing trim. All finished, a grand edifice, all out of debt, the congregation united and harmonious, the Sunday School prosperous, a minister whom we all loved, and nothing was in sight to mar the progress of the church to a victorious and prosperous future.

In those days it was easy to raise money for church work. Many of you will remember the bazaar held in December, 1882, soon after Dr. Helwig's arrival. We took in about $1,300.

The pastorate of Dr. Helwig was highly successful. During its continuance, 191 new members were added to the church. The relations of pastor and people were always amicable and on the best of terms; but as all things human end, so this relation ended by the resignation of the pastor, to take effect on September 1, 1886, having served the congregation four years.

After the resignation of Dr. Helwig, Rev. Dr. Firey was called to succeed him. Dr. Firey was pastor of the First Lutheran Church in Altoona, Pa. He made a visit to Akron in October, 1886, and preached morning and evening. His style of preaching was favorably received by the congregation. A congregational meeting was called to consider the subject of sending him

a call. The result of the meeting was unanimously in favor of the call. The call was sent and accepted. Mr. Firey moved to Akron in the latter part of November, and his pastorate commenced December 1, 1886. The church was in a prosperous condition. Brother Firey, however, gave it a new impulse; his pastorate was more successful than that of any of his predecessors. He was the first minister that succeeded in maintaining a weekly prayer meeting in the church. During his ministry he added 459 new members to the church, which was more than was taken into the church by all the ministers before him, taken together. His preaching differed somewhat from the preaching of the ministers before him. It was more on the revival order. He preached to the heart, rather than to the head. He was fearless in proclaiming the truth, no matter who it hit. His aim was to reach the hearts of men, to direct them to the better life; "Now, now is the accepted time," was his key note.

He was a good preacher and pastor, and a sincere, zealous, conscientious Christian gentleman of a high order.

During his ministry both the senior and junior Christian Endeavor societies were formed; also the Missionary Society, the Band of Hope, and other minor societies. He was a great advocate of the temperance cause, and lost no opportunity to send woe into the ranks of the saloonkeeper.

He resigned to take effect on June 1, 1894, to take a charge in Pottsville, Pa., having been pastor of this church seven years and six months. Mrs. Firey was a model for a preacher's wife. She was a rare Christian lady, who had no ill word against any one, and railed not when railed against. She was devoted to the work of her husband, and, being an educated woman, and more than ordinarily intelligent, was a great help to him and to the work of the church.

They will long be loved and remembered by this congregation, and when we consider the good work they did here, who will say that they are not entitled to more than one star in their crown?

During Brother Firey's ministry two missions went out of the church; one in the South end, now St. Paul's Church, and one in the East end, which was organized into the Swedish Church. This exodus, of course, had the effect of reducing the membership of the church and Sunday School which was, however, compensated by the large additions during Brother Firey's ministry.

Our Sunday School which had increased to an enrollment of over 400 during Brother Firey's time, became somewhat reduced by the exodus of the East and South End churches, but is holding up remarkably well under the supervision of our present superintendent, Mr. E. P. Otis.

After the resignation of Brother Firey, the question of securing a new minister again stood before the congregation. This brings us down to recent and present times where history fades into incidents of yesterday, for all remember the occurrences in the congregation since Brother Firey's time. There is a right way and a wrong way to do things. When we took steps to get a new minister to succeed Brother Firey, we took the wrong way, and invited different ministers to come here and preach. The result was that, after we had heard about half a dozen, we had that many parties in the congregation and, consequently, couldn't agree on any one. To extricate the congregation out of this dilemma, the church council resorted to an unusual expedient, and called a minister on recommendation only, without seeing him or hearing him preach, which, in this instance, however, proved to be all right, for we happened to hit the nail square on the head, for we are in a prosperous condition, and with our new preacher, enjoy the favorable condition of being united both in the congregation and in the minister. May we hope that this relation may long continue, for it is one of the principal conditions under which we can secure continued prosperity and usefulness as a church and Sabbath School.

And now, after traveling through 28 years of checkered history, with many regrets endured, difficulties overcome and battles fought and won, we have arrived at the present time, and stand on the threshold of the future. Has the experience of the past taught us wisdom, and are we better prepared for the unknown future which is yet before us? While we have many regrets for things done and things left undone, we are not without consolation and pleasant things to contemplate in our view of the past, for we have helped to establish a congregation that we hope may be a blessing, not only to us, but to the generations to come after us. We have built this beautiful church edifice and Sunday School room—the latter has the reputation of being unexcelled in this country; our congregation and Sunday School are prosperous and united, and have become one of the principal religious institutions of the city. Will these things endure that we have reared, and will this church continue to be a haven

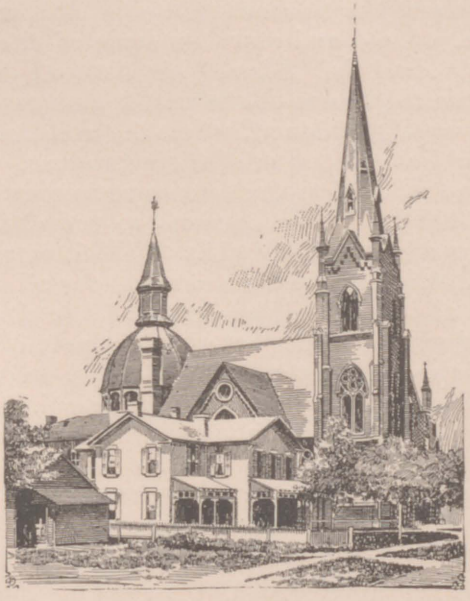
and a guide-post to the unsaved and spiritually inclined that seek a better country? This will depend on the character of those that occupy in the times to come.

The future is always before us on which we can safely rely, if we make the spirit of God our guiding influence. But with love and faith gone, and worldliness and dissensions in their place, God's spirit will depart, and this church will descend to the condition of a club-house, for without God, no church can endure and enjoy true prosperity.

At the end of the next 25 years, when the half century anniversary of this church will be celebrated, we shall not all meet here. I will then not likely stand here to review the events of the past quarter century. Many of us will have fulfilled our destiny, and passed to the other shore.

May we there finally meet, all sanctified and saved, and together sing the jubilee song in everlasting life.

JOHN F. SEIBERLING.



REV. J. B. HELWIG'S, D.D., LETTER.

URBANA, O., May 12, 1896.

TO THE PASTOR AND MEMBERS OF TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, AKRON O.:

My Dear Friends: It affords me pleasure to say that in the recollections of my ministry, my pastorate at Akron will always be remembered as among the most pleasant. And it was the most pleasant also by reason of its having been one among the most prosperous. And the evidences of that prosperity were varied and also substantial, as the years since have proven them to be.

During my pastorate we entered into the new and beautiful Sabbath School rooms, as also into the newly rebuilt and beautiful audience room. And the day of our entrance into the new house was not a glad day only within itself, but it was a day prophetic of blessing and prosperity to every department of the church.

The Sabbath School was then under the leadership of my friend and also always the firm and helpful friend of the church, Mr. J. F. Seiberling, and it still fills my heart with joy as I see the children and the young people flocking in and filling up the first floor and the gallery rooms of the Sabbath School. And my recollection is to the number of 400 and more on some of the pleasant Sabbath mornings. *And God Blessed the Sabbath School.* And so from time to time the hearts of the pastor and parents and teachers and friends were gladdened, when the children came into the church by a public confession of their Saviour. We trust they may have proved faithful to the solemn vows they then took upon themselves to fulfill. The accessions to the church during the four years of my ministry from 1882 to 1886, were 191.

Then in addition to the love we had for all the families of our church, we also admired the spirit of the city. And it is a city also remarkable for the fact that the men of large business affairs as those also eminent and others rising to eminence in the various professions, were strong and influential in the several churches of the city with which they were actively identified.

May the occasion you now celebrate be even more prophetic of God's blessing than any day in the past history of the church. Mrs. Helwig and our daughter Grace, join me in best wishes to all the friends in the church, as also in the prayer for its continued prosperity. Fraternally yours, etc.,

J. B. HELWIG.

Sunday, May 31.

Special Exercises in Sunday School—

1. Addresses .....
   REV. C. S. ALBERT, D. D., REUBEN KRATZ.
2. Letter from Mrs. H. B. Stewart .....
3. History of Infant School .....
   MRS. W. K. FOLTZ.
4. Selections .....
   ORCHESTRA.

10:30 A. M.

1. Devotional ..... *Liturgy*
2. Solo, "If With All Your Hearts" ..... *Mendelssohn*
   RICHARD GRIFFITHS.
3. Sermon .....
   PASTOR.
4. Duet, "The Lord Is My Shepherd" .....
   MRS. F. A. SEIBERLING AND RICHARD GRIFFITHS.
5. Benediction .....

PASTOR'S SERMON.

"Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you."

1 Samuel 12:24.

Samuel was wonderfully sensitive for the honor of God in Israel. When they repudiated the theocratical form of government, this one who had been the mouthpiece of God, seemed to fear that the people may have judged him to be unfaithful. Strong in conscious innocence he asked the assembled hosts to witness against him, but these, with one voice, pronounced him faithful. To establish this beyond the peradventure of doubt, God, in answer to the prayer of Samuel, miraculously manifested His presence, before which the people cowered, and begged Samuel to pray for them. This he promised to do, and further encouraged by saying: "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you." A crucial time had been reached in the history of Israel, and the admonition of the text was given with divine infallibility

We to-day celebrate our silver jubilee. Twenty-five years ago the corner-stone of this edifice was placed in position. Only a few of those then present still tarry with us. With memories of the past, fragrant with much glad self-denial, coming to us, we turn our eyes in anticipation to the future. As soldiers wait for the command of the chosen leader, even so are we gathered in this house of God, and while we wait faith brings us the words, "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you"

One of the great things done for us is that we have a church with a history. That which is new is necessarily untried; time alone can demonstrate whether it is the panacea of the hour. Twenty-five years ago to-day the corner-stone of this house of God was put in position, but preceding this by some three years was the organization of this congregation. These years have not all been one uninterrupted flow of prosperity; days, dark and o'ercast, have come in its earlier history with alarming frequency. Through storm and sunshine, amidst laughter and tears, did God raise up consecrated men and women who labored without weariness to make this church a recognized power in this community, as well as in the world at large. The church has but four ex-

pastors, and one of these has joined the great congregation around the throne of Him whose virtues shine the more resplendent as the gates of the new Jerusalem draw near; the remaining three still tarry in this Beulah land. These names are enshrined in your hearts, and you honor yourselves when you keep their memory green, "like flowers in water." The labor of these pastors, though each was a very Hercules, would have been without fruitage had they not been loyally supported by the membership, and all of it watered by the dews of divine grace. All of this was measurably true, and we of to-day see the dreams of its founders a reality; the church is a recognized force in this community, while consecrated gifts have gone from here to the remotest parts of the world, there to tell of the great things God hath done for us. We then thank God for a church with a history; a church which has always faced to the front, and whose footprints you need not blush to own.

Another great thing which God has done for us is that we have a united church. It would have been a miracle, greater even than the turning of water into wine, or the calming of the storm-tossed sea, or the raising of the dead, to suppose that in all these years there has been no serious clash of opinions. Doubtless many have felt aggrieved and turned back. It is, however, a matter of pride, that there has never been even a threatened split; that the bond of union has ever been sacredly kept. If remembrances of differences come to us this morning, it will certainly quicken our gratitude, will set the music of our thanksgiving in a higher key to note the absolute harmony now among us; to hear the volume swell from our souls as we sing, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." Let us hope and earnestly pray, that whatever may have been in the past, that we have now entered the harbor of peace, where the hills of God's love, constantly encircling us, may protect from the fierce, angry winds of hate, envy and strife; where the blighting breath of hell cannot blast every heavenly flower now blossoming into perfection in our souls. This will certainly be ours, if the Prince of peace abides in and controls us, which may God grant.

Still another great thing which God hath done for us, is that we are grounded in the truth. We are not a rudderless church on the theological sea; but when asked as to the hope we have, hold aloft, while hope and pride struggle for utterance, the Augsburg Confession, the great Magna Charta of all liberty. Do you ask me what is this confession? I answer, it is gems of truth,

gathered by the Reformers and set in a coronet to deck the brow of the mother of all Protestantism; it is the fundamental truths of God's word, as we apprehend them. We do not claim infallibility for this symbol of our faith, but in proportion as education and investigation have advanced, in like ratio has faith in the Augsburg confession been strengthened. There is a manifest restlessness among certain of the Protestant churches because of their standards of faith, and we note with infinite satisfaction that every suggestion from a source worthy of consideration, and most certainly every move toward making the symbol of faith and present belief harmonize, has been a step toward the historic confession; the shadow of the Augsburg Confession rests on the whole Church of Christ, and therein do they find the summer land of faith. If anything is clearly apparent in this day, it is the manifest tendency of the whole Protestant world to unite in fact, if not in name, on the truths as taught in the Augsburg Confession.

This is not a matter of self-glorification, but rather should strengthen our faith in this ancient symbol, which blazed the way through the wilderness of error, to this promised land of civil and religious liberty. Study this confession with an open Bible before you; study it prayerfully, and you will find the harmony so sweet, the thoughts so convincing that you will thank God as never before for a confession which is so strict in its adherence to the truth, so broad in its charity and so omniscient in its sweep.

The great things which God hath done for us are so numerous that we can only mention a few; but I dare not fail to note the field "white unto the harvest." The truth is always magnetic, and when He who is the truth walked with men, we are not surprised to know that the people flocked about him. A church's right to exist is because of its distinctiveness; Jesus himself told his followers to be peculiar unto himself. If you to-day attribute your large membership, your flourishing Sunday School and any other agency of the church, to the personality of any one individual, you thereby belittle the power of the truth of God. Doubtless God used different men, made these the vehicle for truth, but back of their personality was the everlasting word of God. When the roll of names is counted, when the number of those whose vows are recorded at this altar, is known, we cannot but feel a thrill of pride, and make grateful acknowledgment to Almighty God.

But how soon this pride vanishes and a feeling of sadness fills our hearts, for how small a proportion of the energy and zeal

of the church is enlisted in the Lord's work. With too many of us religion is a matter of formality, a good thing; but there must be no conflict with our own inclinations. Let us imagine that every member with all they possess were really consecrated, what a magnificent spectacle for God and man! Friends, weary not in toiling for the church, for you are laboring for Christ, and your reward is just beyond. Think of what He has done for you, and then never let a murmur escape your lips; then you will always think you are doing too little, rather than too much. Not only is there room for a vast development in our own midst, but think of the hundreds who come to our Sunday School, and add to this the parents of many; then don't forget the great number in our city who ought to be among us in name and in heart; climb out this morning on the mount of observation, and you will see a field vast enough for the energies of all—a field literally white "unto the harvest."

Pray God for more laborers! I would like to call your attention to the open doors in our home and foreign work, but time will not permit. Those unto whom much is given, much will be required—how crushing our responsibility! Let us thank God for a field so "white unto the harvest," and then tirelessly toil. At longest, it will not be long; we will only be weary enough to enjoy the rest remaining; at best we can only be unprofitable servants, accepting much and giving little, but we may still be faithful to our trust; then the Father, bending low, may lay His hand on my head and on yours and say, "Well done."

The greatest of all things which the heavenly Father hath done for us is the assurance of His help. The strength of a church, its pride and glory, is not in large membership, in magnificent surroundings, in an eloquent ministry, in entrancing music, though all of these things are to be desired; but it is in the indwelling Spirit of God. Have we this spirit? Yes. He is among us, and in us; but, O! we need a richer, heavenly baptism. Without His presence and help we can never do the work all about us; we can never enter and rest in that sea of peace, the reflection from which now sometimes enters and gladdens our souls. It is this Spirit of God which has led you through all the mazes of the past years, sometimes in a way you knew not, but still safely led you. It is this same Spirit which will abide with us in the unborn years, if we will only ask Him, which will permit us to come at last rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. Let the prayer of each be,

"Abide with me; fast falls the even-tide;
The darkness deepens; with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me."

We look with longing eye to-day to the future; we wonder what is in store there for us as a church. I know not, but hope that the past may be but the promise of still greater things which God will do for us. "Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your hearts," and you may go confidently forward, day by day, and leave all results with Him. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," and this help will not fail in the years to come. Twenty-five years from to-day the golden jubilee of this church will be celebrated; the vast majority of us will then have in our hands the golden harps, which now hang idle on the walls of heaven waiting for us. When the roll of the faithful is called, I pray God that many of you may say, "Here am I." Better still will it be if, when our names are called, and memories of a green mound come to the mind of those still tarrying, they shall point to the same and say, "Faithful unto death." Amen!

Sunday, May 31. 8 P. M.

1. Devotional ..... *Liturgy.*
2. Solo, "On the Cross" ..... *Braddon*
   MRS. E. P. OTIS.
3. Prayer .....
   REV. D. H. BAUSLIN, D. D.
4. Duet, "He Shall Feed His Flock" .....
   MRS. E. P. OTIS AND RICHARD GRIFFITHS.
5. Sermon .....
   REV. C. S. ALBERT, D. D.
6. Solo, "The Ninety and Nine" ..... *Campion*
   MRS. F. A. SEIBERLING.
7. Benediction .....

REV. C. S. ALBERT'S, D. D., SERMON.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

I Peter, 3:15.

In the first ages of the church, the Christians were often called before Pagan tribunals and Jewish judgment-seats to answer for their faith. Confession might end in suffering and death; but they were to confess without fear, neither to be troubled, for they possessed the truth, and God was with them. The Apostle indicates the source of their peace and courage when he exhorts them to sanctify the Lord the Christ in their hearts. He who sets up the Lord the Christ in his heart as the only true object of reverence and fear, is freed from all other fear. He that abides with God and God with him, will not be moved by dread of man.

Out of this abiding presence and sense of Christ, will come the constant readiness to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in him. It will strive to be a complete and satisfactory account of the principles questioned and assailed. He will give a reasonable answer, an answer that shows why he believes, the grounds of that belief. "It may be personal experience of the power of Christ, of the suitableness of His gospel to man's needs and infirmities, and as a remedy for sin; but whatever reason is alleged, it must be true and sound, and so far a sufficient reason."

It is to be given with meekness and fear, kindly, without arrogance, the strong confidence of truth realized apparent. There will be the meekness of Christ, but froth, anger, bluster, will be absent. Reverence will be there, because of him whose cause is defended, because of the greatness of the truths and their infinite consequences. It may be also that there will be reverence for those to whom the reasons of faith are given, recognizing them as worthy to receive and accept these truths. It is in such fashion we should ever present our faith, and in such fashion we would present the Lutheran faith to any not of our name to-night.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of this congregation in this present edifice is celebrated to-day. It is one of the congregations of the Christian church general; but it is also a congregation specially of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. That individual-

izes it, indicates that it has a special purpose to serve, a special form of Christian life to emphasize.

Is there any reason that it should have a separate and distinct existence? In the wish for church unity, so enchanting in appearance, is it reasonable that this organization which represents, with others, the Lutheran Church in the city of Akron, should maintain itself, separate and distinct from others? It has a right so to do, if it stands for distinctive views of doctrine and characteristics of religious life. A church's being, to be justified, must stand for truths so important that the want of its confession would leave the world poorer in the knowledge of God and with less Christian life.

The Lutheran has a distinctive type of doctrine, a life acknowledged by all great religious thinkers. Theologians divide the western church into Romanism and Protestantism; Protestantism doctrinally into Lutheran and Reformed types, all the others springing from these two, either by development or recoil.

"Lutheranism is a specific form of Christian life. As religion is not mere intellectualism, or mere sentiment, or mere activity, so Lutheranism, as a form of the only true religion, Christianity, is far more than a system of doctrines, or a mode of church worship, or a form of church organization. The spirit of a church is always greater and deeper than its expression; its faith is always greater than its confession. Lutheranism is a mode of viewing and receiving and living the truths of Christianity, or rather of viewing and receiving and living in mystical union with Him who is the beginning and end of all these truths. When it is claimed that Lutheranism is a specific form of Christian life, it is implied that there are other specific forms in which the same Christian life exists, and other modes of viewing and receiving and living the common faith of the gospel."

What, then, is Lutheranism? It is the creed that makes the man what he thinks and believes will color his deed. "As the light of the sun colors the tiniest blade of grass, so the idea in the background of the mind tinges every detail of life. Belief within the sphere of religion has a wide range, but its center is God. Tell me what is your conception of God, and I will work out your doctrine of man, of forgiveness, of life, of punishment."

Lutheranism starts from the conception of God—God is love. Salvation has its course in the paternal love of God, but finds this love expressed in Christ.

Lutheranism was not a system of the intellect first, logically wrought out. It arose from the consciousness of sonship with God through Jesus Christ the Lord, wrought out in personal experience.

The story of the early years of Martin Luther tells how the truth came. He had a deep and profound sense of sin. He had an intense conviction of his own evil and guilt before God, the righteous Father and ruler. Sin was not a mere fault or disease, not merely that which is ugly, unworthy, destructive of happiness—but guilt. He tried all Rome offered to satisfy the claims of conscience, the demands of God's holy law. Her teachings, confession, penance, absolution failed to give this earnest soul peace. At length he reached through the word of God the truth that is the heart of the gospel, justification by faith in Jesus Christ. We use his own words: "Through the gospel the righteousness is revealed which avails before God, by which He out of grace and mere compassion, justifies us through faith. Here I felt at once that I was wholly born again and that I had entered through open doors into Paradise itself. That passage of Paul, 'the just shall live by faith,' was truly to me the gate of Paradise." Jesus Christ, laid hold of by faith, brought men into sonship with God. Lutheranism, therefore, starts from deep conviction of sin, inborn as well as actual, but also believes that man is made righteous before God, not by his own merits or works, but is justified freely for Christ's sake through faith, when he believes that he is received into favor and his sins forgiven for Christ's sake, who by His death hath satisfied for sin. Christ became the center of his theology; the work and the person of Christ, the essential heart of the Christian religion, which cannot be understood save through the regenerated heart and mind of the justified believer guided by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. The Lutheran comes directly to the Father through Christ. He rejects the Romish idea that God is a monarch, far removed, surrounded by a brilliant retinue of angels and saints, to whom access is mediated by the priesthood of the church. God is Father to whom he comes directly through Jesus Christ. He is God's child, and as a child has direct access to his Father.

"The Calvinist, equally with the Lutheran, recognizes the same Saviour, but from different points; the Calvinist from the point of view of God's sovereignty, the Lutheran from the point of view of God's redemption. Both accept the Apostles' creed; both hold its articles fully; but the Calvanistic type of doctrine

leans its weight on the first article, the doctrine of God, while the Lutheran rests on the second, the doctrine of the Son, the manifestation of God."

The Lutheran's conception of Christ, his firm realization of God the Father, whose character and purpose are set forth by Christ, prevented him from falling into the view that the efficacy of Christ's atonement was partial and restricted. Christ died for all. He has no sympathy with the view that God predestinates some to be saved, and decreed this from all eternity according to His own will. Salvation is sincerely offered to all men who hear the Gospel. The cause of the condemnation of some who hear the Gospel is their own voluntary rejection of the offer of salvation. God sends His holy spirit to all; He offers grace to all alike through the word, and actually conveys grace through that bond and sacrament to all who receive them in faith.

The Lutheran is distinguished for his soberness and conservatism. God deals with men mediately not immediately—in other words, by the use of means, the word of God and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. He believes that God assures him of salvation, and only God, not man, the priest, as the Romish Church teaches. But he does it through the words and the sacraments through which the Holy Spirit works. The Lutheran stands like a bulwark against that other teaching, whose trend is ever toward fanaticism, which, out of its own consciousness and inner feelings, finds assurance of salvation, claiming that the Holy Spirit without God's word communicates directly to men, salvation and assurance.

The Lutheran soberly abides by God's word, distrusting everything that cannot be traced to its clear teaching. As Luther, at the Diet of Worms, before princes and prelates, rested on the Scriptures, and said: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen;" so God's word is dearer than life to him; its truth is his absolute rule.

The doctrine of justification by faith gives him personal life with God in Christ. He must be in fellowship with Him in living faith. This living experience makes him strong. John Wesley was strong. He confesses that his eyes were opened to the truth of justification by faith, by hearing, the reading of Luther's preface to Romans, wherein this truth was made plain. Because this was his central doctrine, living experience of God in Christ, John Wesley was strong and Methodism has been strong. But Methodism fails to realize that this truth is a borrowed one,

and makes the mistake that the methods of revival it has inaugurated are the real thing over against the vital experience which can come in other fashions than they have laid down. The process is thus made greater than the life itself.

On the other hand, the doctrine of the means of Grace keeps the Lutheran from fanaticism and excess. The individual must not regulate the church by his experience, but regulate his feelings by the word of God. His consciousness is not to override the consciousness of the believers of all ages. It thus prevents the fanaticism which, overleaping the restraints of soberness, exceeds the truth and becomes as destructive as the formalism which falls short of the truth.

The Lutheran is compelled by this conception of Christ in word and sacraments, to receive God's word as it stands, and not refine away its teachings to suit the demands of reason, falsely so called. He is willing to submit his reason to Christ, whom he knows in personal life, where he cannot understand the divine. This is conspicuous in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, where he abides by the words of the institution, "This is my body." To him the body and blood of Christ are truly present under the bread and wine, and are there communicated and received. How, he does not explain. He will not make a miracle and a sacrifice out of it as a Romanist, neither will he deny it, because he cannot understand it. It is enough that Christ has said it. He justly dreads the rationalism that says this saying is only figurative, for he sees that the logical carrying out of this kind of interpretation would destroy all the cardinal doctrines of our faith—the atonement, justification, the Trinity—making them figurative and not real.

The sober, conservative spirit of the Lutheran has made him hold fast to the truths which the Holy Spirit has taught the church. He is not afraid to take a doctrine or practice that the Romish church has, if it be in accordance with God's word. There is something absurd in the cry, "Do not accept this, for Rome has it." If Rome has a truth that is in the word of God, that church is weak which rejects it because of its prejudice against Rome, for it rejects not Rome, but the truth of God. If the doctrines of the Trinity, the person of Christ, the atonement of sin, are to be retained, though received through Rome, so it follows that other truths Rome has are to be kept because true. Rome is best opposed by the sober acceptance of the whole word of God, which will admit what she properly holds, but, consist-

ently from this standpoint, points out her errors and over-teachings. In the matter of worship, the Lutheran was consistent. He would not sever his connection with that which the Holy Spirit wrought out in the church; whatever was not contrary to God's word, he retained wherever it was to edification. He has his system of worship, the historical service, wrought out by the church in her longings after God, the treasures of the church of all ages, intensely scriptural, rich in praise and prayer. Yet, while the Lutheran believes the authorized liturgy is the wisest, he allows freedom in its use, the principle being edification of the congregation. While the other Protestant churches are struggling back to a better-ordered and fuller worship, he needs but resume the beautiful service of the fathers of his church and has the richest and best of all services.

Our doctrine of baptism, that by baptism grace is offered and children received into favor, makes it a sacrament and not a mere rite. It does not cast children out of Christ's kingdom, but demands a place for them in the kingdom. At the same time it lays upon parents and churches and pastors, the obligation to train and nurture the children God has accepted, into the knowledge of Him, and cause them to lay hold for themselves in the church by public confession of the Covenant Grace of Baptism. Hence the church becomes educational—church schools, classes in the catechism, Sunday Schools, are her own and diligently cultivated. In church government the same soberness characterizes him. All believers are priests unto God. The ministry is an office, not an order standing between men and God. To this men are set apart gifted and endowed of God to teach and preach, called of Him, but whose call must be verified by the church. Forms of government with the Lutheran are not essential. In his church there are bishops, presbyters or congregational authority. There can be no hierarchy because of his doctrine of the equality of the ministry; but, for the efficiency of administration there may be diverse forms of government. These things must be determined by circumstances and needs. It is remarkable that the latest researches into the history of the early church sustain the validity of the Lutheran position.

Some one may very naturally ask, "Why we cannot in one day reconstruct our theology? Why depend upon the past with its limited scientific and critical knowledge and not upon the present?" Dale, the great Congregationalist of England, after noting the decline of Calvinism says: "The work of theological

reconstruction must be done. It can only be done effectively when the religious faith and ardor of the church are intense, and when robust genius and massive learning are united with saintly devotion. A theology which is the creation of a poor, degraded religious life will have neither stability nor grandeur. We must all become better Christians before we can hope to see great theologians." Our comfortable theological professors who risk nothing will never have such insight into the abiding truths of God as came to those who were called upon to be ready at any moment to sacrifice life for Christ. Luther lived in an age when the religious faith and ardor of the church were intense. He was not alone a man of robust genius, but of intuitive insight into God's Word. He had massive learning in the Scriptures which his saintly devotion enabled him to understand. Therefore he unfolded truths which ever shall abide, for they are truths out of God's Word, which endures forever.

These truths of the Lutheran church have developed a rich and profound type of piety. The Lutheran approaches God through Christ in childlike confidence. He magnifies the love of God—God is his Father. He accepts the good things of this life frankly. He loves music, the arts, innocent sports, the society of friends, the joys of home. He is no ascetic. He excels in honesty, kindness, affection, cheerfulness, and that "Gemüthlichkeit" for which other nations have not even a name. His piety is profound, meditative, with a rich, inward life. Therefore the hymnology and devotional literature of the Lutheran church are abundant and fervent, and "her charm the charm of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus." Her charitable works are manifold—hospitals, orphanages, homes and the like; while her women as deaconesses have wrought mightily in every form of Christian activity in every land, 14,000 being now enlisted in this self-denying order.

We cannot spare this type of piety in America. It was characteristic of the Jew that he thought no man could be a Christian unless he first became a Jew. Paul's great contention was made for the principle that the Gentile need not become a Jew, who had accepted Christ and was justified by faith. It is characteristic of not a few Englishmen and of some English descended churches, that they think no man is the right kind of Christian unless he first becomes an English Christian. The Salvation Army invades Iceland where there are no jails and no unbelievers—to make Lutheran Christians, English Christians.

Other denominations invade Sweden and Norway, Denmark, Germany, to work, not among the outcasts and the slums, but among Lutheran Christians, to make them Christians after their type. It is both unwarranted and wrong.

We are not ashamed of the Lutheran type; we believe that it is needed more than ever to supplant the striving, aggressive type of Calvanism which has a tendency to overlook the meditative side of piety and grow hard and Puritanical. While we gladly accord them honor for what they have done and are, we will stoutly exalt also our own type of piety, and claim for it its due honor.

Peculiarly we are fitted to deal with vast numbers of the people of the United States—people who are asserting their power; who are giving governors, senators, representatives in ever-increasing number to Congress and the legislatures of the States. These are ours by birth and training, more easily reached by us than others. The economy of force which God has stamped upon all the world, demands that those shall do his work who can do the most good with the least expenditure of time, force and means. These He holds responsible. The effort of others who, despite their disadvantages, struggle to accomplish our work which we neglect, is praiseworthy. But God demands it of us first, and if we fail, ours shall be the curse of the slothful servant in the parable.

The Lutheran Church, in the providence of God, has been kept under every conceivable disadvantage by God in this country. He has raised it to the *fourth* place among Protestant denominations of this land. Evidently there is a great purpose therein. Sound in doctrine, built upon Christ as the center, rejoicing in the Fatherhood of God, believing in regeneration by the Spirit, yet soberly holding the regenerated soul to the means of grace as the rule of faith, with a past that reaches back to the Apostles, appropriating the treasures of the church in worship and doctrine, flexible in government, calmly spiritual, correct in its idea of the ministry, conservative, yet progressive in its piety, opposed to dead formalism, yet equally to fanaticism, with its depth of scholarship and its history of conflict and victory over skepticism, it is needed in this beloved land of ours.

It is ours to be loyal in the highest sense. The loyalty that springs from right apprehension of her glorious truths and life, that presents them in meekness and fear, but with distinct and definite convictions in truth and love, knowing that truth in love

saves, and not weak amiability; the loyalty, too, that delights not in condemning others, but in commending our truths and life by the life we lead in Christ Jesus our Lord ; remembering that ideas are powerless until they are incarnated in living men and women. Then will we make ourselves felt and fulfill our God-given mission, and build with others in this beloved land the Kingdom of God.

Tuesday, June 2. 8 P. M.

1. Devotional .....
   REV. W. L. LEISHER.
2. Short Address .....
   PASTOR.
3. History Ladies' Aid Society and W. H. & W. M. S. .
   MRS. W. K. FOLTZ.
4. History of C. E. Society .....
   Senior .....MARION HUBER
   Junior .....EMMA SELL
5. Letter from Rev. M. J. Firey, D. D .....
6. History of Mission, St. Paul's .....
   REV. W. L. LEISHER.
7. Congregational Reunion and Banquet .....

HISTORY LADIES' AID SOCIETY AND W. H. & W. M. S.

The ladies of Trinity Lutheran Church organized the Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, Feb. 26, 1887, with seven charter members. Officers elected:

Mrs. M. J. Firey, President.
Mrs. H. A. Palmer, Vice President.
Mrs. W. K. Foltz, Recording Secretary.
Mrs. Henry Miller, Corresponding Secretary.
Mrs. Henry Motz, Treasurer.

The present enrollment numbers fifty active members, and forty-one subscribers for the Missionary Journal and Mission Studies.

The society since its organization has sent to the general treasurer, $1,234.53; to Guntur hospital, $30; from the Christian Endeavor Society for the support of a teacher in India, $25; to St. Paul Mission Church, $25; Supplies sent to Dix, Neb., valued at $40.

Trinity Dime Society was organized Feb. 18, 1873. Rev. Fahs pastor.

Officers elected as follows:

Mrs. J. H. Hower, President.
Mrs. I. Harter, Secretary.
Mrs. J. T. Good, Treasurer.

This society was in active operation three years.

Nov. 13, 1879. Organized Ladies' Aid Society, during Dr. Helwig's pastorate; continued its work over five years.

Dec. 4, 1889. Revised the constitution and by-laws; again took up the work to assist the church in its several departments.

Amount of money recevied and expended since 1873 by these societies amounts to $500,563.

May this be our watchword:

"Help us to serve, 'mid praise or blame,
For love of Christ, and in His name."

THE SR. Y. P. S. C. E.

A Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized in Trinity Lutheran Church during the summer of 1889. E. P. Otis, Esq., was elected its first president, and he served from August, 1889, to October, 1890. The other presidents who have served since are as follows:

L. C. Miles, from October, 1890, to October, 1891.
Emil Gammeter, October, 1891, to October, 1892.
L. C. Miles, October, 1892, to April, 1893.
Minnie Huber, April, 1893, to October, 1894.
J. C. Brown, October, 1894, resigned during the year, and Emil Gammeter elected to fill the unexpired term, to October, 1895.
H. S. Steele, October, 1895, to present time.

The society, through its committees and individual members, has done much practical good. Many sick beds have been visited by these young Christian people. Many sick rooms have been made fragrant by the flowers carried there by these loving hands. Many faint hearts have been cheered by the presence and the encouraging words spoken by these messengers of love. Many of our church members who are not members of the society, can bear testimony to the value of the services rendered to the church and individuals by the Christian Endeavor Society. But this society was not organized for the sole purpose of aiding the church and its individual members, they have a broader and deeper appreciation of the work and duty of Christian workers. They have reached out beyond the narrow confines of their own church and their own country; they have heard the cry from across the seas, and they have answered the call for help. Our society is alive with the missionary spirit. They have contributed on an average about $50 a year for home and foreign missions. A number of those who joined the C. E. Society were afterwards received in the church, and became useful and active members; while some of those who had joined the church through confirmation, afterwards became members of the C. E. Society, and there learned to work. There is no place in any other department of church work, where the young get such an intelligent idea of the requirements of Christians as they do in a Christian Endeavor Society. There they grow into Christian life and character.

Our society has never been as strong numerically as some others in the city (numbering, at different times, from forty to seventy-five members), but in efficiency they rank with the best.

JUNIOR C. E. SOCIETY.

Probably when the corner-stone of Trinity Lutheran Church was laid, if some one had said that in twenty-five years from then there would be a flourishing Junior Endeavor Society in the church, they would have been laughed at, as the Endeavorers were unheard of at that time.

Our Junior Society was organized July 5, 1891.

Some of our Juniors will be able to recall this day as one of importance to them. The day was one of those very warm, sultry July days, when no one knows just what to do with himself.

The Constitution of the United Society was read and explained to the children, after which eight of them signed the junior pledge of Christian Endeavor.

The names of those eight are Harley, Herbert, Ruth and Amy Motz, Will and Ray Huber, Fred Brown and Anna Gammeter.

Other names were soon added, until now we have one of the best societies in the city.

During the history of our Juniors we have had an enrollment of 128 names.

Our Juniors have during their history raised about $75.

They have paid all their own expenses, giving a portion to the Sunday School carpet, buying the baptismal font, and, lastly, fixing the altar.

Six Juniors have joined the Senior Society, while twelve have joined the church.

It is most remarkable that during the five years, not one Junior has been called away by death.

REV. M. J. FIREY'S, D. D., LETTER.

POTTSVILLE, May 4, 1896.

DEAR BROTHER KELLER:

With a short time at my command, it shall be employed in fulfilling the promise made several weeks ago, which was to write you a short reminiscent account of my pastorate in Akron. Of course only a few of the principal facts can be alluded to.

November 1, 1887, the call from Akron was received and accepted. December 1 of the same year we boarded the train in Altoona, and with the family landed in Akron at 10 o'clock that night. We were warmly welcomed at the depot by Brother J. F. Seiberling and others.

From the commencement, the work was an encouraging one. Such suggestions as the pastor made were readily accepted and acted upon. There was a mutual understanding between the pastor and the members, so that all the latitude in preaching that was desirable was granted.

The first year's labor resulted in 109 accessions to the church, and the seven and one-half years in an average of about 60 per annum.

There was no midweek prayer service. This feature of church service was deemed necessary in order to develop piety and promote the general spiritual work. So the attempt to establish a prayer service was made. Slowly but surely it grew, and at the time of severing the pastoral relation it had become a prominent factor in the church.

There was no Ladies' Missionary Society in the church. To establish this the ladies of the church rallied to the aid of the pastor's wife, and a missionary society soon became a fixed fact, whose anniversaries on the evening of Easter Sabbath were looked forward to with much hope, which was always realized.

There had been a young people's meeting held on Sabbath evenings. It had rather a precarious existence. This was changed into a Y. P. S. C. E. From that time forward its progress was marked. Through the efforts of Brother Gammeter, Miss Huber and Miss Emma Sell, it grew to such a size that the prayer meeting room became too small for it, and the larger Sabbath School room was employed. A Junior society was also formed.

The Sabbath School had much to contend with. As other churches established their missions in different parts of the city, they necessarily drained it. Yet under the efficient superintendents, Brothers J. F. Seiberling and E. P. Otis, it continued to grow. The orchestra in time became the best in the city.

As the southern part of the city grew, a number of the members moved to that locality. In order to protect our interests in that quarter it was thought necessary to plant a mission there. For two years the Board of Home Missions was importuned to make an appropriation in order that a missionary might be employed and sent into the field. The appropriation was made, the missionary sent, and about thirty members were dismissed from the church to join it, and they were afterwards dismissed to it.

The first church gave a goodly part of its active membership to aid the mission, yet none too large in view of the importance of the movement.

During my ministry of seven and a half years, there was no great revival or unusual interest. The accessions to the church came through the ordinary means.

In a letter of this kind it is impossible to refer to the many events which deserve a mention. On this account many of those which are delightful and others sorrowful must be passed by. It shall ever be pleasant to look back over the years of labor in Akron. If the results were not all that could be expected, yet they were at least years of progress and development. Many precious memories linger with us. May the Master ever guide and bless the members and their pastor. Fraternally,

M. J. FIREY.

TRINITY'S DAUGHTER.

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.

The beginning of this congregation is due to the co-operation of the Home Mission Board and the local mother church, Trinity. In the summer of 1892, Rev. Fred S. Geesy, then a theological student at Gettysburg, was sent here as a tentative missionary. A Sunday School was organized in Thomas hall. After a month or two of earnest work, Mr. Geesy returned to his studies. Then the burden fell on the few faithful ones from Trinity. The Sunday School was maintained in spite of difficulties and small attendance.

Rev. C. B. Etter was commissioned missionary pastor, Jan. 1, 1893. The Sunday School was continued some time in the afternoon, but afterwards changed to morning with a preaching service immediately afterward. This showed the true strength of the mission. The congregation was organized Feb. 12, 1893, with forty-four enrolled as charter members, thirty-one from Trinity. Under Rev. Etter's ministry, the record shows other members received as follows: Twelve by letter, seven by confirmation, and three by baptism, making a total of sixty-six. Besides the Sunday School and morning service, Rev. Etter also conducted Thursday evening prayer meeting at the homes of members and friends; taught catechetical classes and organized a Christian Endeavor and Ladies' Aid Society.

When the South Main Street Methodist Church moved out of the hall, they left it rather empty of seats. Some of the old pews in the cellar of Trinity were resurrected. Late Friday night the men hammered and sawed; early Saturday morning the women scrubbed and washed the pews. A friend in Trinity sent two dozen chairs a present, and St. Paul's was better equipped than before. Rev. Etter resigned Dec. 31, 1893.

During the first three months of 1894, there was no regular pastor, but under the efficient management of the officers, there was preaching and Sunday School every Sunday. Rev. L. V. Schermerhorn and Rev. "Father" Samuel Seachrist supplied the pulpit. The Sunday School was largely increased at this time. Christmas and Easter were rallying days.

Rev. Wm. L. Leisher took charge of the mission April 1, 1894. A subscription paper was started in June to buy a lot and

build a church. The lot was secured in August, and the church was incorporated. It was deemed unwise to begin building in the fall, and more time was desired to secure subscriptions. In May, 1895, after the examination of a set of plans drawn by Chapman & Nixon, the congregation resolved "to build at once, by the help of God, substantially in accordance with the plans submitted." A building committee was appointed, including the pastor and some of the members of Trinity Church Council. Work started in earnest about the middle of June, with several "digging bees." The members and friends excavated the entire basement. In July the stone masons laid the foundations, and Contractor Mr. George H. Worron had the first floor joists in place for corner-stone laying July 28.

Services were held on the church site at 2:30 p. m. Rev. C. E. Keller preached the sermon, Mayor Harper made an address, Trinity Sunday School orchestra and St. Paul's choir furnished music, and Rev. H. L. Wiles, D. D., of Mansfield, O., solicited money. The pastor, Rev. W. L. Leisher, laid the stone. About one thousand people attended in the afternoon. An evening service was held in Trinity church.

The new building was first occupied on the second week of September, although it was only the basement that could then be used, yet it gave a new impetus to the church and Sunday School. October saw the new church completed, and Nov. 3 dawned a perfect day—dedication day.

The Sunday School began the day by marching in a body from the basement to the rooms above, 200 strong, to the song, "Hold the Fort." Rev. A. S. Hartman spoke after the lesson. At the time for morning worship the house was filled. Dr. Hartman delivered the sermon and Rev. Samuel B. Barnitz, D. D., of Des Moines, Ia., made earnest appeal for subscriptions to the debt. A platform meeting was held in the afternoon, at which Rev. G. W. Leisher, father of the pastor, and others, spoke. At the evening service Trinity united with St. Paul's. Rev. C. E. Keller preached the sermon, Trinity's sweet singers, Mesdames Seiberling and Otis, and their efficient aids-de-camp, conducted the music of the evening. The pastor, assisted by the ministers present, consecrated the building to the worship of God and holy uses.

St. Paul's has just recently passed the third anniversary of its organization, and the present pastor entered the third year of his ministry here. In this time 61 members were received, viz.:

Pastors of St. Paul's.

REV. C. B. ETTER.

REV. W. L. LEISHER.

nineteen by letter, eight by confirmation, five by baptism, twenty-nine by renewed profession; of these Trinity gave ten and in all to date, forty-one came from the Mother church. Some were given back; some irregular attendants. The Sunday School under the efficient leadership of Superintendent Amos J. White, rose from 135 to 250 enrolled, and an average attendance of less than 100 to 153. Two prayer meetings were maintained for the most part of this time. A Ladies' Aid Society has materially aided in church work. About four-fifths of the cost of the lot and building have been paid or subscribed. The pastor's salary (the congregation's part), is met monthly, and $65.54 has been given to the church benevolences.

There are yet many in this growing part of Akron who have no church home. Many of these are Lutheran born, baptised or confirmed. Only the Lutheran church is their true spiritual mother, and will best develop their Christian life. Only the General Synod Church gives that full right of private judgment guaranteed us Americans by church and state.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH.